

Anglesea Surf Lifesaving Club Strategy 2025

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Introduction

As the first quarter of the 21st Century begins to come to a close (2020-2025), the Anglesea Surf Lifesaving Club (ASLSC) finds itself at an important transition point - seeking to balance the best of its traditions and history, with the new demands thrust upon it by a rapidly changing social, economic, environmental, and governance landscape. In response...

- should it stop doing certain things?
- should it keep doing things the same?
- should it do things differently?

From a strategic standpoint the correct answer depends on what the Club wants to achieve, and is most likely to involve a dynamic mix of all three of these responses.

- How external forces emerging in the 21st Century interface with the Club's internal capability to deal with them, is crucial.

Insights and analysis presented in this Strategy's accompanying document, the *ASLSC New Strategy and Business Plan 2025 Research and Consultation Report* (Research Report) explore in detail internal and external forces impacting the Club - identifying core strategic issues, key challenges to be overcome, and new opportunities.

- The Research Report should be read in parallel with this Strategy; providing detailed insights and analysis underpinning key strategic themes and directions.

This new Strategy provides a road map for the Club as it navigates towards its ideal destination over the next five years - 2020 to 2025. Based on extensive insight, analysis and research it:

- provides clarity on the Purpose, Mission, Vision, Values, Ethos and Culture of the Club;
- spotlights the key issues and opportunities in play; helping to get everyone on the same page and understand the details of the roadmap; and
- emphasises the importance of an integrated and holistic response bringing the interests and capabilities of Members in the Club Community together, so they can focus on achieving shared goals.

Actions and implementation plans for each strategic direction are presented in the Strategy's accompanying document - the *ASLSC Business Plan 2025* (Business Plan); which includes a schedule of when each action should be delivered, and ideally who should take the lead. It also outlines a small set of priority project initiatives designed to bring key people and resources together for a coordinated effort, accelerating implementation and amplifying impact overall.

- The Business Plan should be read in parallel with this Strategy document; it provides detailed action plans for implementation in response to each core strategic issue and strategic direction.

In summary, the new *ASLSC Strategy 2025* (Strategy) is made up of three key documents, developed in partnership with the Club Community during 2019. These are:

- the *ASLSC Strategic Plan 2025* - (this document)
- the *ASLSC Business Plan 2025* - (action plan supporting this document)
- the *ASLSC Research and Consultation Report* - (providing supporting evidence)

Combined, they complement each other - providing the direction, action and evidence required for the Club to progress confidently with its approach to the future.

Purpose, Mission, Vision, and Values

To define an effective strategy for the Club, it is important to understand what the Strategy must set out to achieve. As the foundation for strategic thinking, this involves clarity on the Purpose, Mission and Vision of the Club, backed by a set of clear Values that enable and empower positive behaviours for action on shared goal.

Without clarity of Purpose, Mission, and Vision - everything is contestable on an ongoing basis - making a coordinated, high impact, strategic approach virtually impossible. And without clear Values to guide and manage group behaviours, it can be very difficult to build and sustain a dominant organisational Culture that deeply supports effective implementation.

The Club's Purpose, Mission, Vision, and Values (as well as its Ethos and Culture) have been a core discussion point with Members and Stakeholders throughout consultation; informing analysis presented in the Research Report.

Using an iterative approach to explore, build, refine, and then validate - the following statements capture the Club's intent:

- **Purpose:**
To save lives and keep people safe on the beach.
- **Mission:**
To deliver exceptional Surf Lifesaving services - protecting and strengthening our community.
- **Vision:**
A flourishing Club Community; where people are well connected, give service, develop to their full potential, socialise and have fun, achieve physical and mental health, care for each other and improve the environment.
- **Values**
Core Values - Service, Participation, and Inclusion.
Principles - Community First. Collaboration. Innovation. Care/Compassion. Celebration.

Values Based Behaviours

Consultation explored the Club's dominant Culture and subcultures in detail - considering key elements that help or hinder participation and performance.

While Culture can be broadly defined as 'the way we do things around here', consultation also examined the Ethos of the Club - being the fundamental character or spirit of the Club's Culture, and the underlying sentiment informing its core beliefs, customs, and practices.

The Club's Culture and Ethos are explored in detail in the Research Report. The key findings present a dominant and resounding viewpoint that building a strong Club Community must be a primary objective for the Club - as the engine room powering its overall performance.

Using an iterative approach to explore, build, refine, and then validate - the following statements clearly express the Club's Core Values, key Principles, and what they look like in terms of behavioural norms expected of all Members:

Core Values

- **Service**
We give as much of ourselves to the Club as we take from it.
- **Participation**
We get involved, help out, and have a go - valuing opportunities for personal and team development just as much as winning medals.
- **Inclusion**
We are proactive getting people involved - demonstrating diversity, equity and inclusion make our community richer in its depth and breadth of capabilities and opportunity.

Core Principles

- **Community First**
The strength of our Community is the engine room powering our shared success.
- **We Collaborate**
We achieve far more working constructively together towards shared goals, than working as individuals in competition with each other.
- **We Innovate**
We are highly adaptive and responsive to change - building on our strong historical foundations to experiment with new ways of doing things that are different and better.
- **We Care and show Compassion**
We care for the health and wellbeing of people and the environment - taking action to promote and restore healthy lifestyles, relationships, and business practices.
- **We Celebrate**
We take the time to connect and celebrate the achievements of our community – noting individual and team participation, and the role the Community plays in this success.

Core Strategic Issues

Distilling insights and analysis in the Research Report reveals three fundamental 'headline' issues affecting the Club's performance. These include:

- **Core Strategic Issue 1 - Changing needs, wants and expectations (External Gap)**

The Club's offering is drifting out of alignment with the changing needs of Members and the wider community in the 21st Century - making it difficult to grow and sustain the active and engaged membership base required to consistently deliver its core responsibilities.

- **Core Strategic Issue 2 - Declining capability (Internal Gap)**

Falling Membership and participation rates are impacting the Club's capability across Patrol, Training and Development and Surf Sports - creating a negative reinforcing cycle that makes the situation increasingly worse due to the breakdown of crucial support mechanisms and key development pathways.

- **Core Strategic Issue 3 - Misalignment of Culture and Values (Culture/Values Gap)**

The lack of a structured approach to building a dominant Culture and set of Values at the Club that support successful implementation of its Vision and Strategy, results in competition between subcultures pulling in different directions.

While there are many crucial sub-issues to be dealt with when looking at all activities across the Club - when considering them deeply, they are more often than not a symptom of these higher level 'headline' or core strategic issues.

In a strategic sense, putting these 'headline issues' up in lights allows the Club Community to recognise the larger forces at play impacting the Club, and ensure efforts on the ground are proactive and constructive in their attempts to target and fix these big issues - over the short, medium and longer term.

- In reality, lots of smaller actions and initiative well targeted to address these major challenges will ensure the Club's success over time - emphasising the importance of addressing both the symptoms and the cause.

Core Strategic Responses

Underpinning the 'headline' or core strategic issues identified in the Research Report are a raft of symptoms impacting almost every aspect of the Club's operations and performance. In pursuit of its Purpose, Mission and Vision, these symptoms can be problematic and require specific responses without losing sight of the need to also address their overall cause.

To ensure the Club's resources are focused on treating both symptoms and their causes, it is useful to define core strategic responses in a way that directly align with the core strategic issues of primary concern - each backed by a set of key strategic directions targeting them.

1. Core Strategic Response 1 - Redesign our value proposition (VP)

- 1.1. Adopt a market focus and customer orientation
- 1.2. Redesign product and service offerings to exceed expectations
- 1.3. Diversify revenue streams to support infrastructure and operational requirements
- 1.4. Create new recruitment pathways, partnerships and member retention schemes
- 1.5. Tell our compelling stories internally and to the rest of the world

2. Core Strategic Response 2 - Strengthen our internal capability (IC)

- 2.1. Fire up the Club's Community engine room
- 2.2. Reactivate participation and performance in Surf Lifesaving and Beach Patrol
- 2.3. Double down on Training and Development
- 2.4. Get the Club's Surf Sports back on track
- 2.5. Take a visible leadership position on Climate Change and the environment;
- 2.6. Embrace our role as part of Victoria's Emergency Management Framework;
- 2.7. Use paid staff to value add the contribution of volunteers, deal with administrative burdens, and support effective succession planning for the future

3. Core Strategic Response 3 - Refocus our Ethos and Culture (EC)

- 3.1. Set clear expectations - early and often
- 3.2. Identify and live the behaviours embedded in our Values
- 3.3. Provide infrastructure and social foundations for the Club Community to thrive
- 3.4. Implement a consistent approach to the practice and development of leadership
- 3.5. Lift the Club's capacity for effective decision making and good governance

Strategic Directions

Redesign our value proposition (VP)

The Club's offering is drifting out of alignment with the changing needs of Members and the wider community in the 21st Century - making it difficult to grow and sustain the active and engaged membership base required to consistently deliver its core responsibilities.

Strategic Directions in response:

1.1 - Adopt a market focus and customer orientation

The majority of Club Members are satisfied, but also seek much more value from their Membership. To deliver more value, the Club will need to shift its thinking from how it can attract more people to take up its existing offerings, to how it can create more valued offerings that attract and retain more people.

This shift in mindset represents an outward looking, customer and market focused orientation - placing the customer, their needs, wants and expectations at the centre. It does not try to push standard offerings onto them; it deliberately seeks to empathise with, understand, and adapt to their specific needs and wants by modifying existing offerings, or inventing new ones.

The Research Report give specific guidance on what people want - noting most Members have much deeper, more comprehensive expectations of the Club's role and purpose in their lives than the need to save lives and keep people safe on the beach; this includes the need for a sense of connectedness and belonging, giving service to the community, developing people, social interaction and having fun, physical and mental health and wellbeing, caring for each other and the environment.

- Meeting these expectations supports the Club's ability to deliver its core Purpose.

The Club ecosystem required to deliver consistent high performance saving lives and keeping people safe on the beach is fed and supported by the Club Community, which is attracted to and sustained by their need to connect, give service, develop people, socialise and have fun, achieve physical and mental health, care for each other and improve the environment.

Adopting a customer focused mindset by empathising with and responding to the needs and wants of Members as a first priority, presents an important opportunity for the Club to rethink and redesign how and what it offers - in a bid to create more value, and attract and retain more Members in pursuit of its core goals.

1.2 - Redesign product and service offerings to exceed expectations

The Club's total membership numbers have been in decline, falling from 2,036 people in 2015/16 to 1,576 in 2018/19. This is not just a problem for the ASLSC, but also reflects a general trend in membership at other clubs in the region too.

In addition to club specific issues, trends towards more informal volunteering, casual and unstructured participation in sports and recreation activities, and key life stages shaping people's ability and motivation to participate in physical activity, all impact Membership numbers.

- This pattern of changing behaviours is becoming increasingly incompatible with the traditional Surf Lifesaving Club offering - evidenced by declining membership.

However, understanding what these limiting factors are presents an important opportunity for the Club to proactively redesign its own offering to overcome them - specifically targeting the needs, wants and expectations of the key groups it most needs to attract, retain and grow.

Adopting a design thinking mindset to pull apart existing offerings and reassemble them in a way that excites and delights people, will be a game changer for the Club - giving it a competitive advantage built on empathy towards its customers, creativity, and innovation.

1.3 - Diversify revenue streams to support infrastructure and operational requirements

While the Club is currently in a good financial position, it needs to develop a more diverse range of income streams to help fund its transition to a more customer focused, 21st Century Club offering products and services that will attract and retain people for the long term.

With substantial expenditure on Clubhouse infrastructure drawing down savings, and a trend towards decreasing income from Membership, there is an imperative for action to generate additional cash flows while carefully managing ongoing operating costs.

The Research Report highlights that avoiding this situation is not such a simple choice; as the challenge of addressing the Club's declining membership, and the need to demonstrate more value to Members would be even more difficult with the Clubhouse falling down around it.

The refurbishment of the Clubhouse is instrumental to the future success and sustainability of the Club, but will require an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to ensure its hunger for financial resources can be properly managed and contained. In response, the Club is in a unique position to tap into new opportunities presented by the visitor economy (tourism), and associated hospitality and retail propositions that are consistent with its Ethos.

Tourism and the Visitor Economy

For the year ending June 2019, The Great Ocean Road region received approximately 6.6 million domestic (overnight and day trip) and international overnight visitors combined, who spent an estimated \$1.5 billion.

Given the prominent location of the Clubhouse, its views, access to the beach and supporting amenities - it is highly likely to be a point of interest for tourists (whether the Club encourages this or not). There is no other location like it in Anglesea.

- Specifically, the Club has significant potential to be a target destination in its own right for self drive, Free Independent Travelers; the 'FIT self drive' market.

The challenge/opportunity is to service the level of activity this may bring to the Club in a way that is manageable, without impeding its core Purpose and the quiet enjoyment of facilities by Club Members; to find a way that they can coexist.

Being proactive to accommodate this situation is crucial - so the Club can be in control of inbound visitors, and how it interacts with them in a way that meets their expectations, and those of its Members.

Visitor Experience, Retail and Hospitality

Being proactive to provide an excellent visitor experience can assist the Club to not only effectively manage and control visitor volumes, but also insulate the Club Member experience and core life saving operations - while generating new sources of revenue.

- The Members shop has a key role as the primary entry and wayfinding point for visitors;
- The Members kiosk will also play a key role, meeting the immediate hospitality needs of visitors and Members looking for casual food and beverage options.

The Club will require permission from the Great Ocean Road Coastal Committee (GORCC) to operate a Members kiosk, and has a strong case when taking into account:

- the significant need to provide a casual food and beverage option for Members, visitors and the community in a safe, controlled, and family friendly environment;
- the lack of any similar offering within ~800 meters, where alternatives beyond this require children to cross a very busy road and dangerous intersection; and
- the importance of this offering to the development of social infrastructure underpinning the Clubs performance - which is a key strategic priority.

Bringing together the discussion on the Members shop and Members kiosk; the Club is encouraged to view them from multiple perspectives; firstly, they both perform important tasks assisting it to build, deliver and manage positive visitor and Member experiences; and second, if done well - they have significant revenue potential.

1.4 - Create new recruitment pathways, partnerships and member retention schemes

The Research Report highlights the need to develop new recruitment pathways to increase Membership, as well as retention initiatives to keep those already involved.

While the Club needs to reverse declining membership, more Members for the sake of greater numbers is not the primary goal; but more Members with a genuine commitment to the Club's Purpose, Mission, Vision and Values - certainly is.

Creating new pathways to Membership that make it easier for like minded people to get involved with the Club will be an important response, as well as ensuring the right incentives are in place to attract and retain key groups, and the skill sets required of most value to the Club.

This approach will shape how the Club promotes new membership, as well as its briefing and induction processes; aiming to create a clear social contract between the Club and its Members that aligns with its Purpose, Mission, Vision, Values, Culture and Ethos.

1.5 - Tell our compelling stories internally and to the rest of the world

The experiences and personal development stories of Club Members are a powerful tool reinforcing the value of service and participation in the Surf Lifesaving Movement. These can, and should play a very important part in attracting, retaining and encouraging existing and future members to not only get involved, but to also stick with it and thrive.

It is clear many Club Members (past and present) are very well suited and willing to tell their success stories, promoting the benefits of aiming for and achieving great things at the Club, and often as a result - more broadly in life. This appears to be a highly valuable, yet untapped resource, and should be given a specific focus.

Strengthen our internal capability (IC)

Falling Membership and participation rates are impacting the Club's capability across Patrol, Training and Development and Surf Sports - creating a negative reinforcing cycle that makes the situation increasingly worse due to the breakdown of crucial support mechanisms and key development pathways.

Strategic Directions in response:

2.1 - Fire up the Club's Community engine room

The strength of the Club Community and its ability to socialise together, build up good rapport and trust with each other, come together to organise, plan and deliver the service elements required for each section to consistently deliver high performance - is absolutely critical.

The new Clubhouse must provide the shared space for the community to come together in a relaxed, welcoming and open atmosphere that has appropriate casual amenities such as access to food, drink and entertainment. The Research Report highlights:

- Captain Moonlite (the existing restaurant offering) is great on many levels, but does not provide the casual and informal offerings required;
- Young people need a space of their own - for young people, by young people - where they can meet, self organise, feel safe, and be unencumbered by the inhibiting culture and behavior of older generations; supported with access to more equipment and basic amenities; and
- With the Clubhouse increasingly open for community and multi-use, it will be important that ancillary activities (such as training, retail, other adventure sport uses, school groups, and tourists etc) do not adversely impact the ability of Members to feel welcome, connect in these spaces, and deliver the Club's core purpose.

Building on these foundations, increasing the social interaction between Members is key; coming together for an intensive 3 weeks of the year just isn't enough to create, build and sustain the Club's 'community engine room' beyond a few deeply committed people.

The Club Community has expressed the significant potential to increase social connection and cohesion by designing and implementing a year round program of formal and informal activities, located in Anglesea, regionally and in Melbourne. This will facilitate much more participation and integration of Patrol, Training and Development, Surf Sports and Club social activities all year round - in several different formats and locations that are more accessible and rewarding for current and potential Members.

2.2 - Reactivate participation and performance in Surf Lifesaving and Beach Patrol

Surfguard Data shows the Club's ability to consistently field patrols is falling to a relatively small number of committed individuals, and cracks are beginning to show in performance - with the potential for default on patrol obligations significantly increasing in 2018/19.

- Given the Club has a large membership base, this is an unacceptable position and needs urgent attention.

The limited number of pathways into Patrol, difficulty identifying and accessing those that do exist, and a lack of coordination between Training and Development, Surf Sports and Patrol sections - all contribute to this problem. Innovation to open up new pathways to Patrol, make them more visible and accessible, as well as better coordination and integration between opportunities and transition points - all need a sharper focus.

The changing nature of society in the 21st Century is also problematic.

Surfguard data clearly shows a majority of Members are missing in action - either not wanting to Patrol, not able to, or they don't know how. As people's needs, wants and expectations appear to be steadily shifting out of alignment with the Club's traditional offering, so does their ability and willingness to Patrol. This presents an important opportunity to dissect the Patrol process, review and redesign it to be more responsive to barriers limiting participation and performance.

Strengthening the Club's Culture and Ethos valuing participation and contribution to its core Purpose must also play a key role in building Patrol capability and performance:

- While not everyone can (or should) Patrol, more could be done to strike the right balance between Members that have a genuine intention to contribute, and those that don't;
- This is not to say that all Members should Patrol - rather that all Members should make a commitment to contribute value to the Club where and when they can; whether by active duty on Patrol, or by some other means to support the Club deliver its core obligations.

Highly visible leadership is required at all levels of the Club to put this Ethos 'up in lights' - stressing its importance, redefining expectations, and shaping the dominant Culture to prioritise mutual gain (two-way value exchange) between Members and the Club.

2.3 - Double down on Training and Development

The Research Report highlights the importance of rebuilding a productive pipeline of Members making the transition all the way through Nippers to Seniors (and beyond) via lifelong learning, participation and development pathways.

While different life stages make this transition challenging for some, the situation is not helped by poor visibility of the member development stages and opportunities available; what is involved, when they take place, why you might want to participate, and how to get involved.

- Closing this information gap, including supported decision making and proactive encouragement to progress will be an important response to reinvigorate the Club's membership and overall performance.

Ensuring people have a clear line of sight through each stage of the development program, where the transition points are, and how to get involved; as well as having role models to aspire to, and people available to provide guidance on the potential career pathways that could open up as a result - are important factors required to build momentum in the program for existing and all new recruits.

- Introduction of an elite Training and Development pathway, to compliment those available in Surf Sports and Patrol, also presents an important opportunity to build deeper capability benefiting the whole Club.

Building a portfolio of three elite streams, the Club could benefit from higher performance across the board - increasing its Training and Development capability, quality and engagement with others specialised in Patrol or Surf Sports. This also provides greater participation and development opportunities for Members who may be stronger in their intellectual and/or practical capabilities, but are perhaps not able to functionally compete in Surf Sports, or Patrol.

- Overcoming the administrative burden, time commitments and financial hurdles required for Training and Development also needs a sharp focus.

Constantly changing award and accreditation requirements from LSV (with little or no notice), ever increasing administration, the professionalisation of Surf Lifesaving, and 'red tape' in general, are all becoming extremely problematic. This is making it very difficult for volunteers to keep their qualifications up to date, and for Clubs to support them with the well planned and properly integrated Training and Development programs they require.

The Research Report highlights significant need for more resources to support volunteer coordination, management of accreditation deadlines, and reaccreditation programming; as well as consistent advocacy to LSV to contain these challenges - or sooner or later barriers to participation for volunteers will become too high.

2.4 - Get the Club's Surf Sports back on track

The Club's competition performance is at its lowest ebb in history. For many years the Club's competition performance benefited from a collaborative partnership with Mentone SLSC; but since both mutually agreed to go their separate ways, ASLSC has been unable to substantially rebuild its standalone Surf Sports competition performance to fill the talent gap created.

- This history, combined with a rapidly changing environment where the nature of participation in organised sports is declining in preference for more casual opportunities, requires a dramatic rethink about how Surf Sports participation can be re-energised.

The Research Report highlights four main areas for a specific focus aimed at lifting Surf Sports participation and performance. These include:

- Growing the breadth and depth of the talent pool feeding into Surf Sports;
- Importing people with significant Surf Sports capability;
- Creating a set of specific Surf Sports scholarships for participation and performance;
- Building entirely new recruitment pipelines.

These approaches cover short, medium and longer term horizons; but in unison, are expected to accelerate participation and performance in Surf Sports overall.

The Club's Ethos and Culture supporting participation as a first priority is a key requirement for improving Surf Sports. Fostering a dominant Culture that values participation ahead of winning medals ensures people don't fail before they begin - by not having a go, because they feel intimidated or afraid they will be judged harshly if they underperform to high expectations.

However, the geographic spread of the Club's Membership is a practical barrier to year round training and participation in Surf Sports activities. With 64% of Members (about 1,000 people) living within 20kms of the Melbourne CBD, getting to Anglesea during the week and/or most weekends throughout the year is not only impractical, but also an unrealistic expectation.

- Without a highly visible, well planned and coordinated program of Surf Sports and associated activities closer to home for Members in Melbourne, there is very limited opportunity, sense of shared purpose or connection for them to engage with - outside the intense three week period in Anglesea over the summer holidays.

Reflecting on the Club's Ethos and Culture, strengthening community and participation are highly valued; but with limited opportunities to come together, train and connect more often, achieving these goals becomes very challenging.

- The development of a much more comprehensive annual program of activities for Members to engage with throughout the entire year has been a common theme in consultation to bridge this gap, and Surf Sports can play an instrumental role.

2.5 - Take a visible leadership position on Climate Change and the environment;

The Research Report highlights a dominant view that the Club should take on a highly visible environmental leadership role for others to follow; particularly with actions addressing the issues of Climate Change and adaptation, the impact of visitors and population growth, waste, and the need to protect and regenerate local flora and fauna.

- Consultation emphasised that caring for the environment should be a core focus of the Club's Culture, and it is in a unique position to support activities resulting in protection of the environment through education, action and showing people how they can help.

The Club has a large number of Members, and potentially many more visitors, who don't necessarily understand the key issues and what they can do about them. This presents an important opportunity to engage, educate and inspire them on environmental issues, be a good role model, and shape positive behaviours. At a practical level, the Club can make an impact in two key areas:

- Proactively reducing its own impact on the environment; and
- Working with partners, visitors and Members reduce the impact of others.

Addressing its own impacts, the Club should adopt an environmental leadership framework, such the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals, and take action on opportunity to show environmental leadership in practical ways, including:

- Implementing sustainable practices:
 - no plastic straws;
 - get rid of single use take away cups;
 - reduce packaging, and ensure sustainable packaging options where required;
- Ensuring providers contracted to the Club (such as Captain Moonlite for example) also deliver environmental leadership and sustainable practices; and
- Ensure transparency in the reporting and measurement of environmental performance and progress towards sustainability goals.

The Club also has the opportunity to seek guidance and support from local sustainability groups, statutory authorities such as Barwon Water, Catchment Management Authorities, government agencies such as DELWP, and its land management authority, the GORCC.

In particular, the GORCC is in a position to assist the Club engaging the support of community members and children to implement activities such as replanting sand dunes, and developing volunteer programs. This can be done by leveraging its existing range of programs, and its capacity to create bespoke options for training and development. Working in partnership with GORCC brings together shared interests in connecting more closely with the local community, and making a positive environmental impact; consistent with the Coastal Marine Management Plan addressing Climate Change, adaptation, and visitor and population growth impacts.

2.6 - Embrace our role as part of Victoria's Emergency Management Framework;

While the Club has no formal emergency management planning, response or recovery roles in the State's Emergency Management framework, Surf Lifesaving is the newest addition to Emergency Management Victoria's (EMV) portfolio of state wide responsibilities.

As the newest edition to EMV's portfolio, the directions and accountabilities of Surf Lifesaving clubs within the State's Emergency Management framework are now beginning to receive a sharper focus. A more proactive approach to partner, collaborate and lead with other agencies in this environment, will enable the Club to significantly shape the interface of Surf Lifesaving in Victoria with the State's Emergency Management framework and responsibilities.

- The Research Report indicates this approach is in the Club's best interests; not only formally because of its lines of administration back to EMV, but also informally because people look to the Club in an emergency situation for support.

Evidence of this was presented by recent bushfires impacting Wye River, where despite specific instructions not to use the Surf Lifesaving Club as a refuge or Place of Last Resort, people did - creating challenging administrative and safety issues for everyone involved.

This example highlights the role Surf Lifesaving clubs play for many communities as connection points in times of crisis (formally or informally), emphasising the need for engagement and coordination with emergency management planners, first responders, and recovery agencies - before, during and after an emergency situation.

- By working more closely together to better understand and coordinate the Club's roles and responsibilities in supporting emergency planning, response and recovery activities, it can play a much bigger role keeping people safe, and create more value for the local and regional community. It can also lead the way setting an example and standard for other clubs to follow, who might still be finding their way within the EMV framework.

ASLSC should take a proactive leadership position working with relevant authorities to act on:

- Vegetation management, augmentation of the Clubhouse, education and training, scenario planning and practice.

Through this work, the Club will be in a position to create wider and deeper relationships with Emergency Management agencies such as police, fire, rescue and ambulance services; not only helping to improve emergency management capabilities in the region, but also connecting more deeply with members of the local community.

- This should also create a range of secondary benefits such as new recruitment pathways, new skills and training development opportunities, hybrid membership types, greater year round use of the new Clubhouse facilities, and emergency management focused project leadership opportunities for up and coming Club Members looking to extend their personal and professional capabilities.

2.7 - Use paid staff to value add the contribution of volunteers

The Club is a pioneer in the Surf Lifesaving sector using paid staff; but when work should be done voluntarily and when it should be paid is not as clear cut as people might like it to be.

- As the Surf Lifesaving sector becomes increasingly professionalised, and the burden of administration, time and cost to keep up skill levels and accreditation continue to rise, so does the challenge of running a relatively complex organisation with volunteers.

The dominant position at the Club is that paid staff should only be used where it is impractical or unreasonable to expect volunteers to do it, because volunteering is central to the Club's Ethos and method of building a strong Club Community and Culture. Using paid staff outside these boundaries, can undermine its cultural and community foundations.

But from a practical perspective, paid staff can add a lot of value carrying workloads and responsibilities that volunteers are increasingly unable to do themselves. Core functions enabled by paid staff include:

- business operations such as finance, administration, compliance, facilities support, communications and marketing; and highly specialised or advanced training and development activities.

The Club also uses a range of contracted staff who deliver services on its behalf, such as cleaning and maintenance, food, beverage and hospitality services.

- The evolution of the Club's staffing model will need to be responsive to this Strategy and associated Business Plan, adapting to support successful implementation.

The Research Report highlights strong demand emerging for three key roles...

A General Manager (GM) to help the Club reach new horizons; freeing Board Members from day to day operational activities to focus more attention on governance, strategy and leadership - aiming to bring a greater scale of effort and capability to the Club so it can achieve transformational outcomes that might be well beyond its ability using volunteers alone.

A Volunteer Coordinator (VC) creating a central point of contact and specific accountability for mapping volunteer skills and capabilities, identifying and scheduling key tasks and roles to be filled, and then proactively matching them.

A Training and Development Coordinator (TDC) to assist with coordination, administration and delivery of Member Development activities, including advanced Awards and the training of trainers; building greater Member capability, keeping records of qualifications, and ensuring they are best positioned to access development and requalification opportunities before they lapse.

Refocus our Ethos and Culture (EC)

The lack of a structured approach to building a dominant Culture and set of Values at the Club that support successful implementation of its Vision and Strategy, results in competition between subcultures pulling in different directions.

Strategic Directions in response:

3.1 - Set clear expectations - early and often

Ensuring people come to the Club with a mindset to create mutual gain, giving as much of themselves to the Club as they take from it, is a key concept embedded in the Club's Values and Ethos. It is an idea that goes to the heart of the organisation, and needs to be put up in lights early and often to cement its rightful place as part of the Club's dominant Culture.

- Re-framing people's expectations to facilitate mutual gain, a clear sense of community, and shared purpose will be key to success building membership and participation.

Setting expectations early and often can be achieved through a range of mechanisms, including in new member marketing materials, induction kits and workshops, focused social media campaigns, signage, deliberate emphasis in regular Club publications such as the Green and White newsletter and Annual Report, prominent signage, Annual Awards targeting exemplars, and through the direct action and behaviour of Club Leaders, role models and mentors.

There are a range of customs and incentive/disincentive mechanisms that can also be used to support the Club's efforts to shape behaviour and Culture towards these priorities; however these need to be carefully balanced towards areas where shared interests can be gently encouraged, rather than taking any kind of 'big stick' approach that would get people off side.

- Getting this balance right can create more value for everyone involved; by ensuring those that do contribute are suitably recognised and rewarded for their efforts, and those that don't are charged an appropriate commercial price for products/services received.

3.2 - Identify and live the behaviours embedded in our Values

Values shape attitudes, which then define behaviours.

- The Club's Values have been developed in partnership with the Club Community, using extensive consultation to draft, iterate, refine and validate them.

The imperative now is to consistently identify and live these behaviours. This is the responsibility of every Member, but if not held to account by leaders and people in positions of influence and authority, they are of little use and the Club Community will be divided.

Behavior inconsistent with the Club's Values can not be left unchecked. It is disruptive to the Club Community's shared agenda and goals, and highly corrosive to the dominant Culture underpinning the Club's ability to operate as a cohesive unit.

- Living the Club's Values is the responsibility of all Members and staff; demonstrating respect and a core commitment to the health and wellbeing, shared purpose, and goals of the Club Community.

It is the responsibility of all Club leaders, people in positions of influence and authority, and the wider Club Community to call out dissonance and demand behaviour consistent with the Club's expectations. Ultimately, following this through is a core responsibility for the Board of Directors. They must lead by example, living and upholding the Club's Values, and where necessary initiate appropriate warnings and disciplinary actions.

3.3 - Provide infrastructure and social foundations for the Club Community to thrive

There is resounding acknowledgement from Members that the strength of the Club Community is underpinned by its ability to socialise together, build up good rapport and trust with each other, come together to organise, plan and deliver the service elements required for each of its sections to consistently deliver high performance. This is also consistent with well proven Community Development theory and best practice.

- The social infrastructure available at the Club, such as food and beverage services, and relaxed and informal meeting spaces, are an essential part of the formula required to achieve this goal.

While the existing restaurant offering is great for high end customers, it does not adequately deliver the range of well differentiated offerings and price points required to meet the wider needs of the Club's membership base. This presents a barrier to improving community connectedness and community strength.

The Research Report provides clear evidence of the need for a more diverse food and beverage offerings than currently available, including:

- A restaurant / café (Captain Moonlite is the existing operator);
- Onsite catering services (new offering);
- A Members bar (new offering); and
- A Members kiosk (new offering - requiring permission from GORCC)

Acknowledging the link between social infrastructure at the Club, and its ability to build the community connection and strength required to consistently deliver high performance, highlights that achieving a more diverse and accessible hospitality offering is not a superficial exercise, but has a much deeper purpose and strategic importance.

The Club's Request for Proposal (RFP) process defines and addresses these imperatives, focussing on the first three dot points above. The Members kiosk is also an important part of the Club's social infrastructure needs, responding to strong demand (particularly from families with young children, and younger people in general) to have access to an informal and relatively inexpensive range of food and drinks in a relaxed, casual setting.

Further justification includes:

- families with young children, and young people in particular, can be quite price sensitive;
- the lack of any similar offering within a reasonable distance means they have to leave the Club and beach area to get services - which is inconvenient and disconnects them from the Club Community; and
- the next best offering (~800m away) requires people to cross a busy road and dangerous intersection - so children cannot go there unless supervised.

3.4 - Implement a consistent approach to the practice and development of leadership

The Club has an important opportunity to ensure people in leadership and management positions are formally coached, supported and mentored throughout their leadership journey in a more structured way, rather than letting it happen organically or by chance.

Currently, highly variable leadership, management and governance capability creates a consistency issue at all levels of the organisation. This leaves people confused and unsure of the standards required, how they measure up, what their development pathway as a manager or leader might be at the Club, and what place and responsibilities they have within it. As a result, it is easy for dominant habits and behaviours to form that don't reflect good practice, but are accepted and normalised because they go substantially unchallenged over time.

- Developing a consistent and structured approach to showcase, teach and develop contemporary leadership and management skills at all levels of the Club, and in all sections, will provide a framework setting clear standards and expectations for all.

Supporting the development of leadership capability at the Club is the role of the entire Club Community, not just a select few; as it is central to success strengthening the Club's Culture, Value and Ethos underpinning overall performance.

- More formal leadership development, structured mentoring and coaching support will be important factors making the challenge and opportunity of leadership at the Club more appealing, effective, and sustainable.

Action to increasing diversity will also play an important part in the Club's future; not only to better balance out the dominant representation of middle and older aged white males in positions of power and influence at the Club, but also as a core response to meet Vicsport's gender equity requirements for a minimum of 40% representation of women on Boards for sporting organisations receiving State Government funding.

- To ensure the Club's membership and representation reflects the contemporary face and values of society, a proactive effort to seek out, attract and make welcome a more socially, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) membership base is required.

Increasing social and cultural diversity across all levels of membership, representation in positions of influence and decision making, and achieving gender equity at Board level, must all be key priorities for the Club. This should be done not just as a matter of compliance, but as a core foundation bringing the Club closer to contemporary society, and to build well rounded capability enabling even higher performance overall.

3.5 - Lift the Club's capacity for effective decision making and good governance

Building a stronger understanding throughout the whole organisation of the legal and governance obligations of Board Members, as well as boardroom conventions, can play an important role supporting improved performance.

- Achieving this on a consistent basis will reduce conflict, increase focus, efficiency and trust, set clear expectations for Board Members and others about what their role is (and isn't), temper wild ambitions and behaviour (if necessary), and build a more ethical and inclusive governance foundation for the long term.

Implementation of a formal Skills Matrix to assess the suitability of people wanting to be on the Board and to ensure a balance of skills and experience are well represented around the boardroom table is required. Increasing diversity, representation, and the use of steering groups will also lift the Board's capacity to make more informed and inclusive decisions.

- The Club will benefit from Vicsport's gender equity requirements for a minimum of 40% representation of women on Boards for sporting organisations receiving State Government funding; while also seeking a more balanced representation of different age groups and cultural backgrounds in general terms.

A focused effort to achieve greater diversity and inclusion, improved leadership, and governance capability, will strengthen the position of the Club to go about its business in a more consistent, inclusive and transparent way - supporting high performance.

Strategy and Business Plan Implementation

At a tactical level, this Strategy's accompanying *Business Plan 2025* defines a substantial schedule of actions specifically designed to bring each strategic direction to reality.

- The new *Business Plan 2025* strikes a balance between being pragmatic and innovative in how the Club will specifically tackle its challenges and opportunities.

Considering the Club's Strategic Context, Purpose, Mission, Vision and Values, this is entirely appropriate. It is clear that a 'business as usual' approach is not likely to be the answer to fixing core performance, recruitment and retention issues threatening to further diminish the Club's viability; the Club will need to be brave and experiment with new and different approaches too.

This can be done with a deep respect for the Club's history and heritage; there is no need to 'throw the baby out with the bathwater'. However to protect what the Club has created from the increasing frequency and impact of change, innovation and adaptation is required to not only survive, but also to ideally thrive.

It will be important to stimulate a Culture of innovation, adaptability and entrepreneurial behaviour, while also taking action to re-frame and re-set expectations for people's involvement in the Club; what it values, and the attitudes and behaviors required for a fair and reasonable two-way value exchange.

- With this approach, the Club can take action to bring together the best parts of its tradition and history, with new opportunities previously impossible or unimaginable to position itself for success in the 21st Century.

Philosophically, implementation of the Strategy and Business Plan is the responsibility of all Members; but in a practical sense, the Club's Board of Directors has the primary leadership and governance responsibility to get it done - in partnership with Members, key stakeholders, and the wider community.

- Responsibility for successful strategy implementation sits with the Board of Directors, and must feature as a priority Agenda Item ongoing, referencing this Strategy and its accompanying *Business Plan 2025* as its agreed road map and plan for action.
- For specific action items responsive to each strategic direction presented in this Strategy, including details on when each action should be implemented and by who, please refer to the ASLSC *Business Plan 2025*.

Appendix A - One Page Strategy Summary

Purpose: To save lives and keep people safe on the beach.

Mission: Deliver exceptional Surf Lifesaving services - protecting and strengthening our community.

Vision: A flourishing Club Community, where people are connected, give service, develop to full potential, socialise, have fun, achieve physical and mental health, care for each other and improve the environment.

Values: Service. Participation. Inclusion - Community First; Collaboration; Innovation; Care; Celebration.

Core Strategic Issues:

- The Club's offering is drifting out of alignment with the changing needs of Members and the wider community in the 21st Century - making it difficult to grow and sustain the active and engaged membership base required to consistently deliver its core responsibilities [External VP Gap];
- Falling Membership and participation rates are impacting the Club's capability across Patrol, Surf Sports and Training and Development - creating a negative reinforcing cycle that makes the situation increasingly worse due to the breakdown of crucial support mechanisms and key development pathways [Internal Capability Gap]; and
- The lack of a structured approach to building a dominant Culture and set of Values at the Club that support successful implementation of its Vision and Strategy, results in competition between subcultures pulling in different directions [Vision/Culture/Strategy Gap].

Core Strategic Responses and Strategic Directions

1. Rebuild Our Value Proposition (VP)
 - 1.1. *Adopt a market focus and customer orientation*
 - 1.2. *Redesign product and service offerings to exceed expectations*
 - 1.3. *Diversify revenue streams to support infrastructure and operational requirements*
 - 1.4. *Create new recruitment pathways, partnerships and member retention schemes*
 - 1.5. *Tell our compelling stories internally and to the rest of the world*
2. Strengthen Our Internal Capability (IC)
 - 2.1. *Fire up the Club's Community engine room*
 - 2.2. *Reactivate participation and high performance in Surf Lifesaving and Beach Patrol*
 - 2.3. *Double down on Training and Development*
 - 2.4. *Get the Club's Surf Sports back on track*
 - 2.5. *Take a visible leadership position on Climate Change and the environment;*
 - 2.6. *Embrace our role as part of Victoria's Emergency Management Framework;*
 - 2.7. *Use paid staff to value add the contribution of volunteers, deal with administrative burdens, and support effective succession planning for the future*
3. Refocus Our Ethos and Culture (EC)
 - 3.1. *Set clear expectations - early and often*
 - 3.2. *Identify and live the behaviours embedded in our Values*
 - 3.3. *Provide infrastructure and social foundations for the Club Community to thrive*
 - 3.4. *Implement a consistent approach to the practice and development of leadership*
 - 3.5. *Lift the Club's capacity for effective decision making and good governance*

End Note

This Strategy was written by [The Geelong Consulting Group](#), in partnership with and on behalf of the Board and Members of the [Anglesea Surf Life Saving Club](#).

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